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AMERICAN LEMONS MEET INCREASING COMPETITION IN NEW ZEALAND

Australian lemons have been given a material advantage over the California product in the New Zealand market as a result of the recent change in the New Zealand tariff which raises the duty on foreign lemons from 2 cents to 4 cents per pound, but gives lemons from Australia a preference of 2 cents per pound, according to a report received in the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Consul Walter F. Boyle at Auckland, New Zealand. Heretofore imported lemons from all sources were dutiable in New Zealand at 2 cents per pound.

The New Zealand imports of lemons during the five years 1922-26 averaged 1,103,000 pounds annually, practically all of which were supplied by Australia, the United States and Italy. The prohibition on imports into New Zealand of fruits, vegetables, grains, etc., from California, during 1925 and up to September 18, 1926, enabled lemon shippers in Australia and Italy to capture the market formerly supplied mainly by the United States. As a result of the embargo imports from Australia increased from an average of 284,000 pounds during the three years 1922-24 to 628,000 pounds in 1925, but declined in 1926 to 502,000 pounds. Imports from Italy increased from an average of only 33,000 pounds in 1922-24 to 472,000 pounds in 1925 and 512,000 pounds in 1926. The following table gives the imports of lemons into New Zealand during the past five years.

LEMONS: Imports into New Zealand, 1922-26

From	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926
	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds
Australia	282,948	398,550	169,218	628,096	502,211
Italy	5,100	45,186	49,215	471,868	511,951
United States	619,033	668,102	731,584	3,375	423,384
Other countries ...	---	---	426	1,904	4,290
Total	907,081	1,109,838	950,443	1,105,243	1,441,836

Source: Official trade statistics reported by Consul Walter F. Boyle at Auckland.

Production of lemons in New Zealand

While it is claimed that lemons of the thin skinned type can be successfully grown in New Zealand, about the only domestic grown lemons appearing on the market are of the thick skinned type. These lemons have an acidity and flavor that differ considerably from the thin skinned lemon produced in California and their thicker skins result in greater expense for boxing and freight. The item of freight is an important consideration since the principal lemon growing district in New Zealand is in the vicinity of Tauranga, necessitating a haul to the port of Auckland from whence they are routed to the markets in other parts of New Zealand.

According to the official statistics of New Zealand there were on March 31, 1926, approximately 19,600 lemon trees in the Auckland district producing about 21,800 bushels of lemons annually. This district produces about 90 per cent of the commercial lemon crop of New Zealand. Both the Australian and New Zealand lemon crops are at their height at a season exactly opposite to that in the United States and Italy. The climate of the citrus producing areas of the Auckland district is peculiar in that oranges, lemons and apples are all produced in commercial quantities in the same area and at the same latitudes. The more northerly sections of the district are entirely free from freezes during the winter months, the summers, however, being much cooler than the summers in the average citrus fruit producing areas of the United States.

Quotations on New Zealand lemons are usually well under those for the American and Italian product. There is much more juice in the American and the Italian lemon and their flavor is far superior to the domestic grown product, states Consul Boyle. The consul points out that until the Auckland lemon growers produce quantities of lemons of the American type, it will take a very high tariff to make them popular in those parts of New Zealand where lemons are not grown and where they must carry a heavy freight charge as part of their value. As it is not unusual at the present time to find citric acid used in the New Zealand households in the place of lemons, the new tariff may decrease the importation of lemons and increase the imports of citric acid, states Consul Boyle.

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